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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: WTO AND EAST ASIA SUMMIT, U.S.-  
CHINA-TAIWAN RELATIONS

11. Summary: Major Chinese-language Taiwan dailies focused their coverage December 13 on local political issues such as Vice President Annette Lu's unexpected announcement Monday evening that she was resigning as acting DPP chairperson (after just five days in the position); and a meeting between KMT Chairman Ma Ying-jeou and PFP Chairman James Soong that ended with them announcing that they had agreed that each party will boost its cooperation with the other before the two formally merge. Almost all newspapers reported in their inside pages about Monday's AIT news briefing in which AIT Agricultural Affairs Section Chief Scott S. Sindelar said AIT is disappointed that Taiwan has not yet resumed U.S. beef imports.

12. Most Taiwan dailies gave limited space to coverage of the WTO Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong (December 13-18) and the East Asia Summit to be held in Kuala Lumpur (December 14). In terms of editorials and commentaries, Taiwan Solidarity Union Legislator Lai Hsin-yuan commented on the significance of these two international meetings in an opinion piece published in the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times"; according to Lai, the events "unveil a clearer and clearer fact": namely, U.S. influence has declined. An editorial in the limited-circulation, conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" claimed that Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick's stated hope that China would become a "responsible stakeholder" is "potentially the most far-reaching redefinition of U.S. policy toward China for years to come." End summary.

#### 11. WTO and East Asia Summit

"When the WTO [Meeting] Coincides with East Asia Summit"

Taiwan Solidarity Union Legislator Lai Hsin-yuan commented in an opinion piece in the centrist, pro-status quo "China Times" [circulation: 400,000] (12/13):

"The World Trade Organization's (WTO) sixth ministerial-level meeting will be held in Hong Kong from December 13-18. In the meantime, the first-ever 'East Asia Summit' will kick off in Kuala Lumpur starting December 14. The coincidence of these two major meetings silently proclaims the future development [of the] direction of the world economic and trading system, which thus deserves our close attention. .

"In contrast to the uncertain future of the WTO, the 'East Asia Summit' has created an upbeat and exciting vision since its very start. Such a contrast does in fact unveil a clearer and clearer fact: namely, U.S. influence has declined. .

"Over the past five years, it has become a prevailing trend for countries to sign regional trade agreements (RTA) and [bilateral] free trade agreements (FTA) with other countries. The trend of signing multilateral or bilateral trade agreements has led to a situation in which strong powers strive for supremacy and has thus utterly changed the originally unilateral world dominated solely by the United States. The first-ever 'East Asia Summit' can best demonstrate such a development. The ASEAN nations deliberately excluded the United States from participating in the summit this time. The movement to get rid of U.S. [influence], or even, the [fostering of] anti-U.S. sentiment, has loomed over Asia . following the tracks of the Middle East and Latin America. .

". Taiwan, as a member of Asia, will likely be even more isolated once Asia determines to move in the direction of RTAs, as symbolized by the East Asia Summit. In the face of the new global economic order [that is forming] in the wake of declining U.S. influence, Taiwan must embrace a more and more flexible way of thinking and an open-minded vision; it should no longer look upon the United States as the [world's] sole leader but should be sensitive enough to accommodate the re-organizational activities going on in every region so as to develop broader and more diversified economic relations within the changing world order."

#### 12. U.S.-China-Taiwan Relations

"U.S., China as Stakeholders"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (12/13):

"A new world of `stakeholders' is taking shape, with the U.S. retaining its leadership and China a hesitant collaborator. Championed by Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick, who is officially described as Secretary Condoleezza Rice's `principal deputy, adviser and alter ego,' it is potentially the most far-reaching redefinition of U.S. policy towards China for years to come. .

"There is a growing understanding that the future is unlikely to be dominated by the West in the manner of the past two centuries. And today, the most important region in the world is East Asia, where the future will be played out, despite recent tensions between China, South Korea and Japan over history. In this new world, Taiwan remains a stake but a diminished one. Washington has reaffirmed its commitment to the one-China policy, the three communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act, while Beijing has enacted an anti-secession law to balance the U.S. law and safeguard its territorial integrity, with tacit U.S. understanding.

"Both have vowed to maintain the status quo: Taiwan is part of China, before peaceful reunification, its current status, as the diplomatically isolated Republic of China, cannot be changed; Taiwan independence is war. This new arrangement has thus freed the two powers from the highly emotional Taiwan problem, making it possible for them to collaborate on other issues of mutual interests. The U.S. will help China rise and China will help the U.S. lead.

"President Bush recently praised Taiwan for having "created a free and democratic `Chinese society.' Independence advocates would have preferred him to use `Taiwanese' rather than `Chinese' in that context. But that was exactly Washington's message to Taipei and Beijing."

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